

NAZAFARIN LOTFI

SUBTLE TIME

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Nazafarin Lotfi was born in Mashhad, Iran, and is currently based between Chicago and Tucson, Arizona. She received both her MFA and her Post-Baccalaureate certificate from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and her BA from University of Tehran. The artist's work has been exhibited at Brand New Gallery, Milan; Ana Cristea Gallery, New York City; DUVE Berlin, Berlin; soon.tw, Montreal; Everybody Gallery, Tucson, Arizona; and Chicago Artists Coalition, Logan Center at the University of Chicago, Regards, Arts Incubator, The Franklin, Goldfinch, Andrew Rafacz Gallery, and Ralph Arnold Gallery in Chicago. Lotfi has been awarded an artist residency by the Arts + Public Life and Center for the Study of Race, Politics, & Culture at the University of Chicago. She has received grants from the Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona; Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona; and the city of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Her work is represented by Regards, Chicago.

This exhibition was curated by the Teen Art Group at University Galleries.

structural frame

- What materials are Lotfi's artworks made of? Why do you think she uses these materials?
- What formal qualities such as color, shape, and form do you see repeated in Lotfi's work?
- Examine installation views of *Negative Capabilities*. How do the sculptures and drawings relate to the space around them? Consider the windows, floor, and lines that define the room.

cultural frame

- What relationships are suggested between humans, nature, and the landscape in Lotfi's performance videos *Walk* and *Walk 2*?
- Compare Lotfi's sculptures, drawings, and performances. How are they similar? How are they different?
- How does Lotfi's work reference physical boundaries?
- What architectural shapes and forms do you see in Lotfi's work? What do they make you think of?
- Read about Lotfi's work as a class. How have her life experiences affected the work she creates? Do you see any references to these experiences in her work?

subjective frame

- Examine Lotfi's drawings, sculptures, and video performances. What is your immediate response to these works? Are you drawn to one medium over another?
- Does Lotfi's work remind you of anything from your life?
- Does any of Lotfi's work remind you of artwork you have seen before?



Cloud of Unknowing, 2016. Papier-mâché, plaster, paint, and stick. 43 x 27 x 18 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Regards, Chicago. Photo credit: Brian Griffin.

VOCABULARY

ARCHITECTURAL

in reference to buildings or structures

BOUNDARY

something that indicates a limit or extent.¹ A boundary can be natural like a mountain, or man-made like a wall or a border.

CURATE

to thoughtfully select and organize artifacts, objects, or images

FORM

suggests three dimensionality: height, width, and depth

FORMAL QUALITIES

refers to elements and principles of design such as line, shape, color, texture, balance, movement, and contrast

GEOMETRIC

shapes such as triangles, circles, and squares

SUBJECTIVE

something that is open to interpretation; up to the viewer to decide

SUBJECT MATTER

what is being depicted in an image or artwork

MONOCHROMATIC

tints, tones, and shades of one color

NON-POROUS

something that does not absorb water

PAPIER-MÂCHÉ

paper bonded with glue, paste, or starch

TRANSIT

getting from one place to another

¹ boundary (2020). In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved May 15, 2020, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/boundary>

See nazafarinlotfi.com for additional information about the artist's work

EVENTS

- **Online exhibition opening:** June 1

Links to workshops and artist interviews available on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook @universitygalleriesisu



ART-MAKING ACTIVITIES

- Examine Lotfi's drawings titled *Interiors*. What shapes do you see? What do these shapes remind you of? Draw a variety of sizes of geometric shapes. Consider referencing the windows, doorways, and walls of the room you are in. Cut these shapes out and trace them onto another piece of paper focusing on overlapping the shapes. Color each shape using a monochromatic color scheme. Compare and contrast your work with Lotfi's drawings.
- Drape fabric over an object. As a class, compare the draped fabric with Lotfi's sculpture *Cloud of Unknowing*. How do you think Lotfi made this sculpture? What materials do you think she used? Individually choose a non-porous object and cover the surface using Papier-mâché. Drape the paper so that it reveals some areas of the form below while hiding other areas. Once the Papier-mâché dries, remove it from the object. Decorate the surface using colored pencils, oil pastels, crayons, paint, or patterned paper. Is the object you used visible in your finished sculpture? How do you feel about Lotfi's sculpture after using similar materials and processes?
- As a class, discuss the relationships between Lotfi's sculptures and the land in her work *Transit*. How are her sculptures similar to the landscape? How are they different? Why do you think the artist photographed herself carrying these sculptures? Why do you think she then photographed the sculptures on the landscape? Create an artwork inspired by the landscape around you. Document yourself transporting the work outside and photograph your work with the landscape.



Transit, 2020. Digital photographs. Courtesy of the artist and Regards, Chicago.